TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

DATE: August 31, 1964

FROM : Mr. F. J. Baumgardner

1 - Mr. Belmont
1- Mr. Mohr
1- Mr. DeLoach
1- Mr. Sullivan
1- Mr. D. J. Brennan
1- Mr. Bland
1- Mr. Baumgardner

SUBJECT: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
SECURITY MATTER - COMMUNIST

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE [illegible]

Martin Luther King, Jr., is to be in West Berlin, Germany, for the opening of that city's cultural festival 9/13/64. We have just obtained details of his itinerary for travel abroad which reveals that he will leave the United States either 9/11 or 12/64 and not return until 9/22/64. Included in his itinerary is a visit to Rome, Italy. He is to go there from Madrid, Spain, 9/18/64, and remain in Rome until the morning of 9/20/64 when he will go to London, England.

We have not as yet obtained any information indicating the purpose of his visit to Rome, but it is entirely likely that he may seek and be given an audience with the Pope. This likelihood is clearly evident when one considers that King is receiving more and more acclaim as a leader of the Negro people in this country, plus the fact that he is a clergyman. Further, King we know is being considered for the Nobel Peace Prize and his receiving an audience with the Pope would likely receive considerable publicity, especially in Europe, further enhancing his chances for the Prize.

It would be shocking indeed for such an unscrupulous characte as King to receive an audience with the Pope. It is believed that if a plan to see the Pope is in the making, it ought to be nipped in the bud. We have considered different possibilities for meeting this problem and believe that the best one would be to have Assistant Director Malone of the New York Office personally contact [redacted] and on a highly confidential basis [redacted] (1) the fact that King is to visit Rome and the likelihood of his receiving an audience with the Pope and (2) the unsavory nature of King's character, both from a subversive and [redacted] Malone should be able to impress upon [redacted] the likely embarrassment that may result to the Pope should he grant King an audience and King is later discredited. In this light it would hardly even be necessary for Malone to "suggest" what [redacted] should do to forestall any possible audience. Malone should stress the highly confidential nature of this matter with [redacted] and insure that the Bureau is in no

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ENCLOSURE

UNCLASSIFIED

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way associated with any action taken by [redacted] Malone should also obtain from [redacted] a commitment that he will be able to block any attempt by King to gain an audience with the Pope. If [redacted] is not able to give such an assurance, we must immediately know this so that we may explore some other avenue

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RECOMMENDATION:

If approved, Assistant Director Malone should personally orally brief [redacted] in accordance with the attached "Top Secret" summary indicating King's communist connections and [redacted] (This is the same summary we previously used in preventing King's receiving an honorary degree from Marquette University.) The attached summary should also be used for telephonically briefing Malone. This matter should receive most expeditious handling because of the time element involved.

O.K.

Jackson handling
1:30 PM